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Wanda Szuszkiewicz- Górszczyk and Jerzy Górszczyk activities in Iran and Palestine during World War II

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WANDA SZUSZKIEWICZ- GÓRSZCZYK AND JERZY GÓRSZCZYK ACTIVITIES IN IRAN AND PALESTINE DURING WORLD WAR II

Polish emigrants turned up in other countries for many years. The part of them left the country for political reasons, next went to the USA or to Western European countries to paid purposes mainly. In the twentieth century migrations was caused by the war. Nazi aggression on Polish territory in 1939 has influenced to the mass movement of Poles to the eastern regions. On 17 September 1939 Soviet Union military invasion marked the beginning of a wave of migration to Romania, Hungary, Latvia and Lithuania¹. For the considerable part of refugees these countries constituted only a first step on the difficult war trail to France (military emigration), however part from them (mainly civil emigrants) decided to stay in Romania² or decided to go through Turkey to countries of the Middle East. Iran was one of countries of the Middle East at which during the warfare Poles leaving the Soviet Union turned up. Amongst refugees in Iran appeared Wanda Szuszkiewicz and Jerzy Górszczyk, whose work influenced to the political, educational, cultural life of the local Polish community.

1. Short biography of Wanda`s Szuszkiewicz, Jerzy`s Górszczyk and actions of Franciszek Haluch

Jerzy Górszczyk before the start of World War II acted in structures of the People`s Party (Stronnictwo Ludowe) and the Rural Youth Union "Wici" (Związek Młodzieży Wiejskiej "Wici"). In September 1939 he managed to escape from Romania (place of internment of the Polish government and major politicians) and joined the Conciliation Committee Grouping Political parties and Polish Refugees (Komitet Porozumiewawczy Stronnictw i Ugrupowań Politycznych Uchodźstwa Polskiego). In 1940 he made an attempt to return to the country, however, the Soviets arrested him in the moment, when he crossed border. He spent 2 years in the Soviet Union in prison by the reason of

¹ P. Łossowski, *Lithuania and Polish affairs*, Warsaw 1982, p. 194.

² Refugees in Romania very quickly began to organize cultural and educational life. A. Vetulani, *Outside the flames of war*, Warsaw 1976, pp. 8-10.

his political activities. He left prison as a result of an amnesty under the Sikorski-Maisky Agreement. In Iran he appeared with a wave of refugees soon after the appointment of Franciszek Haluch to delegate of the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare³. In 1943 local government institutions have joined the organization of the Ministry of Internal Affairs in Teheran. Jerzy Górszczyk in March 1943 was appointed to the position of manager of this ministry⁴.

J. Górszczyk couldn't communicate with F. Haluch for the first days of his reign in the Interior Ministry. Initially, the Interior Ministry didn't have the statute where would be strictly regulated its competence. The manager informed the Minister of State for the Middle East in the Polish government in exile Henryk Strasburger. He developed the statute Interior Ministry for Jerzy Górszczyk, which was signed by the above mentioned and F. Haluch in Cairo in December 1943. The statute bore record of competence manager of Interior Ministry: "he could effect the politician inspection in refugee camps and receive political information from the delegate Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare and administrators of camps⁵".

Decisions that have been signed in Cairo didn't accept the Minister of Labour and Social Welfare in London Jan Stańczyk, who found there the same competence of delegate Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare. According to his opinion the Interior Ministry shouldn't control of order in the camps and he couldn't have access to the information strictly intended for Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare. Górszczyk accused Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare of gathering political information and surveillance of him⁶.

F. Haluch submitted proposals to stay in Iran to refugees. He openly spoke of the terrible living conditions in India – place where was planned further evacuation. With his opinion didn't agree Karol Bader, manager of the Polish Legation in Teheran, which proposed reductions into Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare and F. Haluch recalling from the position of the delegate. All matters that previously occupied the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare would

³ K. Walaszczuk, *Activity People's Party of Polish refugees in Iran during the years 1942- 1945*, Rural Papers University of Łódź 2011, No. 16, pp. 82- 84.

⁴ J. Pietrzak, *Polish refugees in the Middle East during the Second World War*, Łódź 2012, p. 277.

⁵ The Polish Institute and Museum of gen. Sikorski (hereafter: IMPS), PRM.L- Bureau of the Council of Ministers, Libermanowa's Archives, vol. 67, Letter J. Górszczyk to W. Banaczyk of 11 December 1943.

⁶ IMPS, PRM.L, vol. 67, Telegram J. Górszczyk to W. Banaczyk of 20 January 1944, 25 January 1944.

then be taken over by the Polish Legation in Teheran⁷. Haluch could count on supporting on the part of minister J. Stańczyk, therefore wasn't dismissed. Haluch confiscated "Green Banner" ("Zielony Sztandar") edited by People's Party and he forbade the distribution of all camps press, which wasn't associated with the materials issued by the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare in camps. People's Party activists have criticized the politics F. Haluch concerning filling positions in Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, where were working mainly appointed adherents of the delegate. In August 1943 People's Party Secretary's office officially suspended the cooperation with the Polish Socialist Party. Polish Socialist Party activists were accused of Józef Piłsudski's sympathies⁸. The conflict governing authorities in Iran to strengthen its position sought Jerzy Górszczyk and his wife Wanda Szuszkiewicz-Górszczyk.

Haluch opposed to the fact of supporting Internal Ministry for the activities of the newly established Polish Teachers Association in Iran. It was known that the president of this organization was Wanda Szuszkiewicz, wife of J. Górszczyk. She was born in 1912. Her political activity was associated also with the People's Party. After the arrival to Iran, she helped in the creation construction of the local People's Party associations. When was established in October 1942 first Political Committee in Tehran, she became a secretary. People's Party activists at that time were sharply criticized by the military environment. They accused Wanda Szuszkiewicz, that she had contacted in important cases with Communist Wanda Wasilewska⁹. After giving an explanation, she was cleared of suspicion for such actions. Szuszkiewicz after the creating the first camps in Teheran took the educational work¹⁰.

2. Educational activities of Wanda Szuszkiewicz-Górszczyk – creating the Polish Teacher's Union in Iran

The main organizer of Polish education in Iran was a delegate of the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Public Education, who was stationed in

⁷ State Archives, HI MSZ – Archive Mikołajczyk's, K. Bader's coded telegram to Mr Raczyński of 23 August 1943, p. 122.

⁸ IPMS, PRM.L., vol. 51, J. Górszczyk's telegram of 27 August 1943, p. 124.

⁹ State Archives, Ministry of Justice of the Polish Government in London, Extracts from the minutes of testimony gathered by the B. Kawecki – Teheran Research Committee in Isfahan on defamation of the Management Association of Polish Teachers in Isfahan by Wanda Szuszkiewicz- Górszczyk, vol. 133, pp. 34-36.

¹⁰ R. Buczek, *People's Party in the years 1939-1945. Organization and Policy*, London 1975, p. 434.

Teheran- Stanisław Rzerzycha. He had the right to manage the education on the local level, which also connected with create the administration. In the Delegation of Ministry of Religious Affairs and Public Education worked school inspectors (in Isfahan Adam Lorenowicz, Dominik Pytel, in Ahwaz Andrzej Machalski). The exception was here Delegation Ministry of Religious Affairs and Public Education in Jerusalem, where wasn't employed even if one inspector¹¹. Activities St. Rzerzycha in literature was judged well, however, he was accused by the Delegation Ministry of Religious Affairs and Public Education of recruiting young people to schools in Palestine (this type of schools were connecting with army)¹².

The end of the year 1943 it was the time of formation of the first teachers' unions in Iran. Górszczyk in its annual report emphasized the diversity of qualifications amongst educational staffs, the political affiliation and the previous absence of cooperation between teachers working in Iran¹³. She thought that on the one hand, it had been caused by the lack of sufficient communication, but above all with lack of support teaching staff in Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare. Only her visit in Isfahan and the meeting with the inspector A. Lorenowicz caused assuming the Polish Teacher's Union in Isfahan.

Originally planned a meeting at which had been elected president and amongst the candidates for this function was Franciszek Dąbrowski. As a result of the lack of the transport to Isfahan¹⁴, local authorities alone established on president Adam Krzewiński, to the management board entered A. Lorenowicz (in spite of the opposition to occupy St. Rzerzycha, who claimed that the school inspector shall not hold other positions related to the managing the education) and Maria Krzyżanowska – the headmaster of the High School and Secondary School in Isfahan¹⁵.

¹¹ J. Draus, *Education and Polish Science in the Middle East 1939- 1950*, Lublin 1993, p. 26.

¹² M. J. Górszczyk, *Sketches emigration. Romania, Iran, Palestine, Egypt*, Warsaw 1948, p. 56. St. Rzerzycha remained at his post until the end of the operation of the Delegation Ministry of Religious Affairs and Public Education (August 1945).

¹³ State Archives, Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, The mutual relations between teachers affiliated organizations in Iran, vol. 92, p. 1.

¹⁴ Isfahan was away from Teheran about 426 km. It wasn't possible to reach it by train, while traveling by car occupied two days. IMPS, Ministry of Religious Affairs and Public Education, A. 19. II. / 8, Report on the state of education in Iran during the period 1 February to 30 April 1944, p. 2.

¹⁵ A. Lorenowicz was dismissed from the position of school inspector decision of the Polish Teacher's Union in the UK. State Archives, Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, About mutual relations between teachers affiliated organizations in Iran, vol. 92, p. 2.

Polish Teacher`s Union in Isfahan was launched on 28 November 1943. The number of consisted members took 108 teachers, which accounted for 98% of all teachers. The main aim was the creation of the association to education and training teacher`s staff. The association was divided into 3 sections: scientific, economic, and party`s. It invited well- known person e.g. hosted Minister H. Strasburger, helped pay for Polish prisoners of war in Germany¹⁶.

Initially, the Polish Teacher`s Union in Isfahan was difficult to convince the target in to join the largest group of teachers. It wasn`t so simple at all, because amongst teachers consisted in it were boycotted meetings, impelled to withdraw from the association. Actions of the authorities to the Polish Teacher`s Union in Iran were disapproving. Delegation Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare sought to dismantle all associations by exiling teachers to Africa. Wanda Szuszkiewicz-Górszczyk aspired for supporting the better contact from A. Krzewiński and M. Krzyżanowska, seeing that they have the support of St. Rzerzycha, who also cared about creating one organization gathering teachers from Iran.

In the Polish Teacher`s Union in Isfahan by Szuszkiewicz-Górszczyk there were finance abuses – A. Krzewiński sent in this matter a series of letters to the Polish Teacher`s Union in London (it cost 34 pounds), in which he wanted to discredit Szuszkiewicz-Górszczyk. In his view, she sent to Isfahan Dąbrowski, who had a quarrel board of the Polish Teacher`s Union in Isfahan¹⁷. A. Krzewiński in a letter to the Ministry of Justice demanded conducting the external financial control, because the union Audit Committee didn`t find any irregularities¹⁸. The matter was left for examining by competent ministerial institutions.

Wanda Szuszkiewicz-Górszczyk insistently aspired to the consolidation of the teaching profession. The first establishing the cooperation between the Polish Teacher`s Union in Teheran and Isfahan through contact with Dąbrowski, who was moved to Isfahan, where he became the headmaster of the camp`s school. Soon afterwards it took place tie – up teacher organizations from Teheran, Isfahan, Ahwaz and it opened under the name consisting of the Polish

¹⁶ IMPS, Ministry of Religious Affairs and Public Education, A. 19. II. / 62, Correspondence with ministries, Report on the current activities Teachers Association of Poles in Isfahan (1944), p. 1.

¹⁷ State Archives, Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, About mutual relations between teachers affiliated organizations in Iran, vol. 92, p. 3.

¹⁸ State Archives, Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, The Research Committee of the Ministry of Justice in Teheran, vol. 131, p. 1.

Teacher`s Association in Iran¹⁹. W. Szuszkiewicz-Górszczyk was chosen on president of Polish Teacher`s Association in Iran²⁰. Branches of the united organization operated efficiently in Ahwaz and Teheran. In Isfahan she acted A. Krzewiński and A. Lorenowicza, whose activities were supported by the delegate Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare F. Halucha and very unstable in their actions St. Rzerzycha²¹. The management board of the Polish Teacher`s Union in Isfahan, in principle to the end of the warfare disregarded belonging to the Polish Teacher`s Association in Iran, because used own seals and published letters referred to teachers in Isfahan²².

W. Szuszkiewicz-Górszczyk`s actions for teachers have been hampered by the Polish delegate Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare and his followers. This dislike to Szuszkiewicz-Górszczyk resulted of course from earlier wrangles of F. Haluch with her husband. In January 1945 Internal Ministry was changed manager J. Górszczyk, they appointed him for military service in Palestine. His wife Wanda was expecting a baby then, therefore Stanislaw Mikołajczyk wrote the letter to Prime Minister Tomasz Arciszewski in order to prevent the transfer of Górszczyk²³. However Prime Minister Arciszewski, was adamant and he motivated his decision, “came into sharp conflict with the local population and endangered the seriousness of the office²⁴”. His place was taken by Witold Matkowski²⁵. Górszczyk, admittedly still acted politically on the area in Palestine, but People`s Party didn`t have a political strong position this way like in Iran, although cooperated with the People`s Party association in Africa.

Wanda Szuszkiewicz-Górszczyk and her husband Jerzy Górszczyk had an intense influence on the life of Polish refugees in Iran during World War II. The person who wanted to nullify the effects of their actions was F. Haluch, who insisted on not only to dominate other political parties existing in the political area of “Polish Iran” but Polish Teachers` Union in this area, chaired

¹⁹ IMPS, PRM.L., vol. 52, Message of 29 March 1944, p. 146.

²⁰ IMPS, PRM.L., vol. 52, Message of 7 February 1944, p. 86.

²¹ IMPS, PRM.L., vol. 53, Telegram dated on 25 November 1944, p. 188.

²² State Archives, Polish Legation in Teheran to Minister Dr. K. Bader, vol. 592, p. 1.

²³ IPMS, PRM. – Presidium of the Council of Ministers, vol. 169/21, Letter S. Mikołajczyk to T. Arciszewski of 10 February 1945, p. 6.

²⁴ IPMS, PRM., vol. 169/21, T. Arciszewski`s letter to S. Mikołajczyk of 27 February 1945, p. 8.

²⁵ State Archives, HI – Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Z. Berezovsky`s encrypted telegram to the Polish Legation in Teheran of 25 January 1945, p. 88.

by W. Szuszkiewicz- Górszczyk. These personal conflicts and the resignation St. Mikołajczyk, but the appointment for his place T. Arciszewski blighted any chances of cooperation between the groups represented by Haluch and Górszczyk. Decreasing in 1944 and 1945 number of refugees in Iran led to the political resolution to the Polish community on this area, in which delegates of ministries, representatives of trade unions expressed their support for the government T. Arciszewski (People`s Party didn`t have it any more representatives)²⁶. The last official journal of the supporters of People`s Party, Polish Socialist Party, National Party, Union Territories of North and South-East, a variety of professional and social associations in Iran was a resolution of 26 June 1945 placed on the hand of the president of the Republic of Poland W. Raczkiewicz and Prime Minister T. Arciszewski²⁷. This document confirmed the earlier lack of the agreement Polish politicians in Iran. It reminded about scandalous quarrel that destroyed authority of the Polish government-in-exile, whose local representatives in Iran weren`t able to cooperate with themselves and such persons like the marriage Górszczyk`s sentenced to the departure and work in Palestine.

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In this paper author presents the action Wanda Szuszkiewicz- Górszczyk and her husband Jerzy Górszczyk in Iran during Second World War. Raise the issue of conflict with Franciszek Haluch – delegate of the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare and it`s impact on the lives of Polish refugees in Iran. The conflict has caused the problem in establishing of the organization – Polish Teacher`s Union in Iran, which the president was Wanda Szuszkiewicz-Górszczyk. Her actions and her husband, the head of Ministry of Internal Affairs contributed to personal conflicts within the two largest Polish political parties in Iran-Polish Socialist Party and the People`s Party. Subsequent political situation (dismissal Stanisław Mikołajczyk) shattered the chance of cooperation between the political parties and marriage of Górszczyk had to discontinue it`s activities in Iran and go to Palestine.

²⁶ IMPS, A. 12. – Embassy in London, vol. 53/40 W, Polish Legation in Teheran to Embassy in London-a letter of 1 March 1945.

²⁷ IMPS, A. 11 E / 1000 – Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Polish Legation in Teheran to MSZ- letter of 26 June 1945.